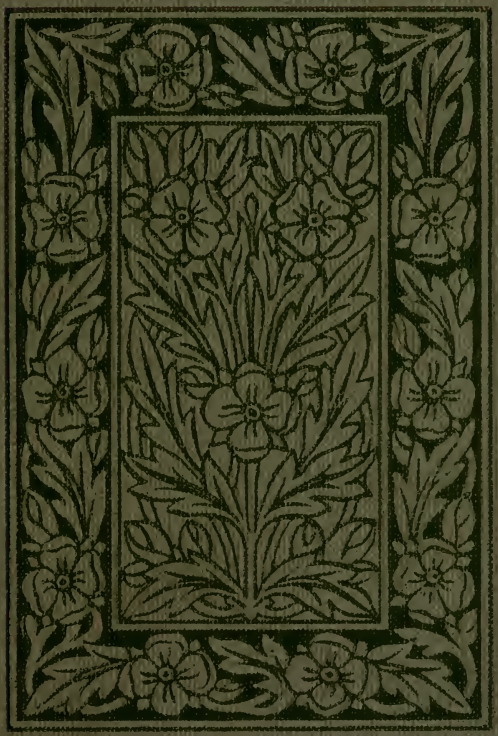
OUR MAN OF PATIENCE



ANEES T. BARODY

OUR MAN OF PATIENCE

A MODERN PATRIARCH

PLAYING THE DERBOUKA

OUR MAN OF PATIENCE

BY

REV. ANEES T. BARODY, Ph. D.

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TO

THE EVER-SWEET MEMORY

OF THE ENGLISH QUAKER MISSIONARY

THOMAS LITTLE

WHOSE PATIENCE AND BROTHERLY LOVE

WERE THE MAIN FACTORS IN THE

SHAPING OF MY CHRISTIAN

LIFE THIS BOOK IS

DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION

The book of Job is generally recognized as one of the most interesting of all the books of the Old Testament and, as a divine drama, stands at the top. No book is more Oriental. The whole Bible is an Oriental book, but the book of Job is of such a character that, in order to interpret it rightly, one must approach it from the Oriental point of view. The author of this volume, being a native of Mt. Lebanon and having received his academic training in the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut, has been successful in approaching it from this point of view. I have read his manuscript with great interest. Without fancifully interpreting the book from a dramatic point of view he,

nevertheless, brings to bear upon it so much that is characteristic of his own country that a flood of new light is thrown upon it. The average student of the Bible, therefore, cannot possibly read his work without having gained a better appreciation of the book. Most heartily do I commend it to the Bible reading public.

GEORGE L. ROBINSON

McCormick Theological Seminary,
Chicago, Illinois,
October, 9th, 1914.

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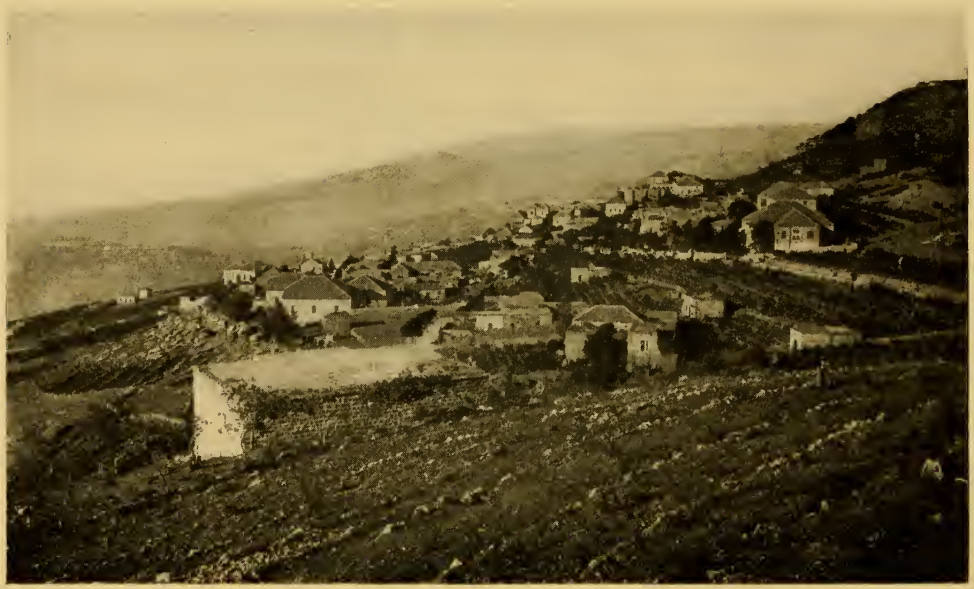

SUK-EL-GHARB

A village on Mount Lebanon

CHAPTER I

OUR MAN OF PATIENCE

Job is known all over the Holy Land as the Man of Patience. He looms above the grand procession of moral leaders in the Old Testament as the most courageous poet and of unwavering integrity. His patience has become proverbial. In the moment of extreme distress, when endurance is nearly at an end, a Syrian flings out his arms and exclaims, "O for the patience of Job (ya sabr Ayyub)!"

May it not be stated at the start that the main point in the Book of Job is not the problem of suffering, as many scholars have alleged. God allows Satan to put Job's boasted perfection to the test, to let loose at him the hungry

hosts of the horrid animalcula of elephantiasis, or black leprosy. Then both God and Satan stand outside the arena and watch the combat. Hence, physical suffering is the means by which Job's integrity is being tested and cannot, without doing injustice to our reasoning faculties, be considered the main point in the Book of Job.

The main point is the unshakable trust of the suffering poet in his own integrity, or rather in his own self. Therefore, all things considered, the key to the Book of Job is the words — "Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go" (27 : 5, 6). It is this holding on to one's integrity that constitutes the main buttress of patience, and it is this that gives the inhabitants of old Syria the right to call Job the Man of Patience. When the

keen-sighted James of the New Testament sweeps with his eyes the vast field of history in search for a man whose patience he could hold up before the persecuted Christians of his day as a good example, his eyes rest on none other than Job, and thus he says, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." Moreover, it is Job's integrity, or patience in its truest sense, that Satan has in mind when he says, Doth Job fear God for nought? and that Jehovah also has in mind when He says about Job, "And he still holdeth fast his integrity although thou movedest me against him, to destroy him without cause."

The Book of Job is, doubtless, a great book. Luther says of it, "Magnificent and sublime as no other book in Scripture." Renan says, "The Book of Job is the Hebrew book par excellence — it is in the Book of Job that the

force, the beauty, the depth of the Hebrew genius are seen at their best." Tennyson counts it "the greatest poem of ancient or modern times." "I call it," says Carlyle, "apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or noble sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book; all men's book."

As to the nature of the Book of Job, the prevailing opinion among scholars is that the Book of Job is a drama, the writer of which is a Hebrew genius who took up the story of an afflicted non-Israelite from the land of Uz, located somewhere in the northeastern part of Palestine, and made it the basis of a masterful dialogue on the problem of suffering. Cheney's idea is that the story was picked up by the Israelites in old Bashan, known

IN THE LAND OF UZ

at present as Hauran, the stronghold of the Druses.

Being a drama it necessarily follows that the story recorded by the prose parts of the book predates the poetry part, or that the story comes first and the dialogue next. That this drama theory has gained wide acceptance in Occidental countries is the dominant note of the elaborate introductions of almost all the newest commentaries on Job. One of the leading men in a very distinguished publishing house in New York stated last August that the final word on Job had already been uttered — that final word, of course, presupposing the drama theory. James Strahan's book, which now appears on the shelf of many a minister's library, is regarded by many as unsurpassable — and Strahan also holds the drama theory. Let it then be borne in mind that almost all

Occidental scholars regard the Book of Job a drama.

But what do Oriental scholars say? It must be stated that the few Oriental scholars who have lately paid any attention to the Book of Job have utterly rejected the drama theory for cogent reasons which are forthcoming. Foremost among those scholars is the far-famed Holy-Land lecturer, known by the pseudonym Saleem, who is averse to have his real name appear in print. The reader is, however, requested to pay strict attention to what the modern Oriental scholars hold regarding the Book of Job.

As a sidelight let it be noted that the Holy Land is a distinctively picturesque country, and that the writers of that country have concerned themselves more with the drawing of pictures than with the stating of definite concrete facts. These pictures are intended

to be looked at from a distance, whence the spiritual light with which they are irradiated makes them beautiful and highly impressive. But they are never intended to be put under the microscope, or subjected to the rigid tests of exact logic and science to which Occidental scholars have been subjecting them. There is a placard at the entrance of the vast field of Oriental religious teaching which all Occidental peoples will do well to read and keep in mind. That placard commands: "Look from a distance; draw not nigh hither; take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." It takes an Oriental to interpret the exact meaning of those pictures and to disclose the thoughts which surged in the bosoms of the ancient Oriental seers when their hands were busily painting those pictures. In other

words, a great deal of reading between the lines is necessary to a correct understanding of the Scriptures. And who can do that better than the present-day Orientals?

A PRESENT-DAY PICTURE

CHAPTER II

A PRESENT-DAY PICTURE

On the eleventh of June, 1914, while traveling in the Holy Land gathering material for his lectures, Saleem happened to enter one evening a small village at the foot of Hermon. Owing to the absence of inns and hotels in most of the Lebanon villages, — in fact, there are no hotels except in the few villages known as summer resorts, and even those are open only during the summer, — and owing also to the far-famed instinctive hospitality of the Syrians, Saleem had to put up at some house. No sooner had he reached the chief market-place than a number of people encircled him, bombarded him with all sorts

of questions, for he wore European clothes, and then started to extend to him, in the most felicitous terms of ornate expression, their invitations to accompany them to their homes. He followed the one whom he supposed, judging from his honeyed loquacity and the marked respect which the others accorded him, to be the most influential person in that mountain village.

After supper Saleem's host, whose name was Abu-Milhim, addressing him, said:

"O most respectful guest, you have come to your own people, our house is yours, you cannot imagine how happy we are to have you. Let me ask if you are fond of *muanna*" (a very common kind of Arabic poetry).

Saleem assured him that he was, and that he had been for a long time traveling all over Syria with the special purpose of meeting Syrian poets and securing all he

PLAYING THE RUBABA

could of the effusions of their naturally effervescent minds. Then Abu-Milhim went on:

"You know, our generous guest, we have a very old man in our village, called Abu-Ayyub (father of Job), who has been a *muanna* composer and singer from childhood. Although he is bedridden and looks as if he has been already for years a denizen of the horrible vaults of death, his fondness of *muanna* has not waxed cold and his insatiable desire to meet Lebanon poets tête-à-tête and have a brush with them has never waned. The people here believe that Sheikh Abu-Ayyub — by the way, his name fits him splendidly for he and his son Ayyub are both men of suffering — will one day die with the tambourine in his clutch. Poets seek him from every quarter of the globe to break a lance with him, and as far as my knowledge goes he has never been

known to bite the dust. Although he is about ninety years old — probably more, for he does not know the exact date of his birth — his mind is as clear as that of a young man of thirty. We are very proud of him."

Here Abu-Milhim pulled out his tobacco bag from underneath his waist-sash, rolled up very deftly a thin cigarette, lighted it by a flint spark, and went on, after taking a long puff:

"Fortunately two eminent poets have called on Sheikh Abu-Ayyub this evening, evidently for another poetical fray. It is not at all in accordance with good hospitality to ask you if you would like to accompany me to Sheikh Abu-Ayyub's house, but your expressed desire to meet Lebanon poets justifies such a breach of hospitality."

"By your life, Sheikh Abu-Milhim," affirmed Saleem, "it

would, indeed, be a breach of hospitality to deprive me of attending such a poetical contest. Your kindness is overflowing. You have no right at all to utter the word *breach*."

On entering Sheikh Abu-Ayyub's house Saleem was astonished to find the small abode of the old invalid poet full of people. It was only after a great deal of wandering to and fro, amid a babel of assertions of self-abasement and nectarous expressions of welcome, that Saleem succeeded in finding a resting-place on a small cushion by the wall.

A few feet away, opposite Saleem, was a very old man sitting in a bed spread on a fantastically-colored old Turkish rug. The deep furrows on his face, the long snow-white beard and scanty hair, the look of languor in his dark sunken eyes, indicated that he had seen far more years than the

average man sees and had drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs. His bed-covers, originally white, looked now as black as if they had been for months in a collier's shop: not because the old man had nobody to look after him and keep his bed clean, but because, as Saleem learned afterward, his hermitical, peculiarly-warped mind considered dirt one of the many means of torture by which his body must be mortified before his soul could become worthy of a golden crown. That was Sheikh Abu-Ayyub, the famous poet.

On casting a scrutinizing look over the noisy crowd Saleem saw that there were two other poets in the house, and each of them was surrounded by a large circle of grim-visaged, broad-shouldered young men. Although sitting in his bed, with a deathly face and deep glistening eyes, Sheikh Abu-Ayyub was also surrounded by a

group of hilarious, sun-burnt young men, the clapping of whose massive, callous hands might be heard for miles away.

Instantly two young men appeared, one with a bottle of *arak*[1] in the right hand and a small glass cup in the left, and the other with a tray on which there were four or five plates full of pistachio, salted chick-peas, and some native sweets. With the exception of the boys everybody in the house drank a cup and helped himself to a little of the contents of the tray. Those who had no inclination to drink the proffered cup could, by touching the edge of it with their lips, prove to the host and his guests that they were by no means discourteous. But poets must drink *arak*, for it is universally believed

[1] A strong Syrian intoxicating drink distilled from grape juice and anise-seed. It is naturally colorless, but turns milk-white on addition of water. Drunkards call it, "Tears of the Virgin."

in Syria that *arak*, the essence of the very heart-blood of the vine, is the most intimate friend of impromptu poets, and the mind-wheels will not revolve unless first well lubricated by "Tears of the Virgin."

Very soon afterward a tambourine was passed to Sheikh Abu-Ayyub. He refused to touch it, shaking his head in a very significant manner, for, being the host, it would be impolite for him to sing first. But the other two poets declared in a very respectful manner that Sheikh Abu-Ayyub was older than their fathers, and, whether host or guest, he possessed that memorable evening the unchallengeable right of letting go the first arrow.

After a great deal of taking and giving, Sheikh Abu-Ayyub raised the tambourine in his left hand and struck it with the right to a certain familiar tune, which was in-

stantly caught up by one or two derbouka strikers among his young men, while the rest of them clapped their big hands in perfect consonance with the tambourine and derboukas.

It was not more than a few minutes before Sheikh Abu-Ayyub's young men turned almost mad. They gave expression to their so-far suppressed feelings of joy in such a wild uproarious manner that one might have feared for the safety of the ceiling had it not had oak beams and a covering of heavy earth one foot deep. The well-cadenced music of the clapping of their hard hands was deafening.

No sooner had the uproar subsided than Sheikh Abu-Ayyub sang *muanna,* striking the tambourine gently:

Alas! my days are fleeting: joy has fled away,

And sadness, dark and grim, has come
with me to stay.
My jet-black hair has turned as white
as Hermon snow,
And e'en my razor seems with anger
now to bay.[1]

His young men, clapping exultingly to the tune of the tambourine and derboukas, sang after him the last two lines, so as to give him a little time for thinking and to express their approval of what he had already sung. Then he went on, using the third line of the first quatrain as a foundation for another quatrain:

My jet-black hair has turned as white
as Hermon snow,
And e'en my razor urges me a beard to
grow.

[1] A fairly exact translation of the poetry Sheikh Abu-Ayyub sang offhand. The Arabic measure and way of rhyming are also kept. The tune called muanna is slow and dreamy; low at the beginning of the line, high at the middle, and low again at the end. It varies a little with the different poets.

A shout of wild approval rent the air, and the young men of the old poet, clapping more wildly than ever, sang after him twice over the last line, quite in accordance with *muanna* laws. Then he proceeded:

In previous days my wife would never answer, No,
But now, alas! she worries me by night and day.

At this point the third and fourth lines only of the first quatrain were sung over again, as a refrain, by Sheikh Abu-Ayyub's young men. Then he took up the fourth line of the second quatrain, changed it a little, and sang:

But now, alas! she worries me by day and night,
Remembering not that I have nearly lost my sight.
I wish some angel or some massive heavenly kite
Would take me where the saints of God forever pray.

Would take me where the saints of God forever sing,
And save me from my own Creator's deadly sting;
For God, and wife, and friends, and every mortal thing—
All seem to have some good advice to preach or say.

All seem to have some good advice to say or preach
And mine own righteousness before the stars impeach.
Beware, O man! the one whom now you love and teach
Your art may, Judas-like, your sacred love betray.

The last word had hardly been uttered when Sheikh Abu-Ayybu's young men cheered wildly for two or three minutes: all half-standing, waving their hands above their heads, and shouting one after another — "Bishaïf Sheikh Abu-Ayyub ya shabab wa hay, hay! Bow down with your sword and shield to Sheikh Abu-Ayyub,

O young men, hay, hay!! . . ."
and then cheering all together.

Then Sheikh Abu-Ayyub struck the tambourine and sang *quarradi:*

Sacred friendship will not bend
Though the wounds of parting smart:
Welcome, welcome, faithful friend,
Peace and joy have filled my heart.

For about fifteen minutes the *quarradi* poured out from the toothless mouth of the old poet, singing one quatrain or two at a time, the last line always rhyming with the fourth line of the first quatrain. The boisterously excited young men, squatting like big imps around the old man's bed, sang over the refrain, which consisted of the third and fourth lines of the first quatrain, at the end of every quatrain.

The *quarradi* tune is rapid and melodious, the foot of the verse being a regular trochee, with two rises and two falls in the voice in every line, the rise preceding the

fall. It is somewhat a relief to the ear after the slow, dreamy, touching *muanna* tune.

As soon as Sheikh Abu-Ayyub felt a little tired he passed the tambourine over to the poet next to him in age, Abu-Naseef, who had been quietly and carefully taking in what he had been singing.

Abu-Naseef had the whole field for himself for about twenty minutes, singing both *muanna* and *quarradi*. His young men in their turn were not less boisterous than Sheikh Abu-Ayyub's. Once or twice one of them, a pockmarked, thick-set, jolly-looking fellow, would snatch the fez off the head of one of his neighbors in excitement and hit the ceiling with it.

From Abu-Naseef the tambourine passed to Abu-Asaad, who did his best to throw his two competitors into the shade. So the singing went on: each of the three poets attempting to outshine the other

BEIRUT

Lebanon in the distance, covered with snow

Sanneen

two. It did not take them long before they clung to a definite subject and followed it for about three hours. Sheikh Abu-Ayyub had unquestionably the ripest and pithiest thoughts, but owing to his old age and his manifest physical weakness he was liable to occasional digressions from the main line of thought. Sometimes, while his young men were singing the refrain, he would ask, "What did I say last?" That was, of course, pardonable in his case.

At the conclusion of that memorable poetical contest Saleem walked back to his host's home in a very exultant state of mind. He had attended in his younger days many poetical frays of that kind — in fact every wedding on Mt. Lebanon and every special occasion of merriment is considered incomplete without the clash of the intellectual swords of the native poets and without the tinkling

sounds of their tambourines. But never before had his mind busied itself so assiduously in hunting up analogies between the poetical contest related in the Book of Job and the contest of the Lebanon poets which he had witnessed that evening.

While we are gazing at this present-day picture it is well for us to know that nearly every village on Mt. Lebanon boasts of at least one poet, called in Arabic *qawwal*, who can sing poetry impromptu whenever and wherever he is called upon to do so. The majority of those Lebanon poets are illiterate, but now and then one comes across some flaming genius of a poet who can read and write and who can sing as good poetry as that of Job, if not better. One marvels how such a poet can sing offhand for several hours well-measured poetry, interspersed with clever hits and beautiful gems of thought,

which will not fail to put to shame the poetry of many a college professor. Long years of untiring practice, encouraged and sustained by the enthusiastic approval with which success in that art is met by the people, have developed the poetical faculties of those poets to a very high degree.

It is, however, a remarkable fact, yea, rather an important discovery, that the larger part of the poetry of the Book of Job can, without much difficulty, be sung to the *quarradi* tune, which is very common in Syria at present. In some places the *quarradi* tune fits splendidly and the Hebrew flows on, without a single jar, like the smoothest of Arabic *quarradi*.

Therefore, looking at the Book of Job in the simplest way — " and real things are simple " — we must aver that *it is an account of a poetical contest which took place a long time ago at some isolated place*

in Syria. That account was probably written out by one man, who took from the poets what they had sung in the contest, revised or moulded it according to his own mind, and then gave it out to the world in the shape we have in our hands now. Many similar collections of Arabic poetry, sung within the last fifty years by illiterate Lebanon poets, are being sold in all the book stores of Palestine.

With this fresh present-day picture before our minds we can now proceed to the study of the Book of Job.

AN OLD-TIME PICTURE

"THE OXEN WERE PLOUGHING"

Job 1:13

CHAPTER III

AN OLD-TIME PICTURE

The old poet Job, or Sheikh Ayyub, has been stricken with elephantiasis. He lies on the dunghill — called *mizbeleh* in Arabic — in front of his home and starts scraping the boils and scales with a potsherd. Soon the news of his affliction spreads around and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, mount their camels and start toward his home. When they see him lying on the dunghill they lift up their voices and weep, a custom which still survives in Syrian funerals.

Job's friends do not only weep — they rend their clothes and sprinkle dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sit down with

Job upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none speaks a word unto him: for they see that his grief is very great.

Then Job takes the tambourine and strikes it.

The poetical contest is about to begin. The poets have seated themselves according to age. A large crowd of people has gathered around them. Men and women, old and young, are impatiently waiting for the beginning of the long-expected contest. The odds are against the three friends, for Job has heretofore been invincible. Some, however, are rather afraid that the malignant disease from which he is suffering may affect the usual easy flow of his thoughts and the clarity of his mind.

After this Job opens his mouth and curses his day. He curses the day in which he was born (3 : 3–10), asks why he did not die when he was born (3 : 11–19), and

why should one be made to live when he wants to die (3 : 20–26).

The cursing by Job of the day in which he was born indicates that the sufferer is exceedingly angry and is wishing for death to come and relieve him from his sufferings. He longs to pass into the shadowy land of death. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary are at rest" (3 : 17).

Here it is that Job's attitude toward God, in the eyes of the three friends, becomes that of defiance rather than of patient, unquestioning submission. One's birth and death are completely in God's hands and it is blasphemous for any human being to whisper the least complaint regarding them. The terrific solitude of Sinai, where Jehovah gave his name to man, is merely an emblem of the still solitude which must rule in every temple bearing God's

name, whether that temple be of stones or of flesh and blood. That is what the Oriental believes to be the proper attitude of man toward God.

A woman is squatting on the narrow sidewalk in Beirut, gesticulating hysterically in a very piteous way. Now and then she strikes her head hard with the palms of both hands. Every one that sees her thinks that she is insane. She says in a heart-rending tone, "I pray you, kill me and rid me of this miserable life!" Suddenly you hear a voice saying to that woman in a commanding tone: "Blaspheme not, O daughter; bless God and keep quiet; the hour of death has wisely been withheld from man; bridle your tongue in the presence of the omnipotent God; sinful man has no right to utter a single complaint in His presence." The speaker has a wide white turban and a long

grizzled beard. He is one of the best known religious leaders in Beirut.

What this religious leader says to the forlorn woman voices the sentiment of almost all Orientals regarding man's attitude toward God in the hour of suffering. Whether one is suffering or not it is highly sacrilegious to curse the birthday or to utter a single complaint regarding God's dealings with his children. The present inhabitants of the Holy Land say, "Man's eye must never be turned toward Heaven with any other object than that of reverent prayer." Therefore, the first sign of Job's rebellion in the eyes of his three friends is his cursing of his birthday and the wishing for death.

THE SPEECHES OF THE THREE FRIENDS

A noteworthy characteristic of all the Syrian poets is the desire

to make every other poet lick the dust. Every poetical contest begins with suave honeyed expressions of strikingly clever thoughts, either in praise of a bridegroom or some other eminent person, or in elucidating some interesting topic, and ends with the hurling of venomous missiles in every direction. Many of the illiterate people seem to think that such a contest could not be very interesting without such a spectacular ending. The poet who can be wittiest at his opponent's expense generally gets the most applause. Thus poets begin the contest as wise men, the respected intellectual leaders of the community, and end as bitter enemies ready to jump at each other's throats. And very often at such a moment the intervention of an outsider, a universally respected man, an Elihu, or the village priest, introduces a spirit of reconciliation, thus pre-

"THOU SHALT FORGET THY MISERY"
Job 11: 16

venting the occurrence of an actual, and sometimes bloody, feud.

Now taking up the speeches of Eliphaz we find manifested in them the same Oriental spirit which has just been described. Eliphaz begins (ch. 4 and 5) in a calm, courteous spirit, and ends in an agitated rancorous one. He begins with indirect insinuations, and ends with malicious merciless stabs.

Being a native of the land of dreams and visions Eliphaz sees a vision in the night. He is sleeping in the open, in the center of a vast plain hemmed in on all sides by high bleak mountains. It is midnight, and perfect silence reigns. The sky above his head is besprinkled with myriads of bold stars, the unusually clear twinkling of which seems to belie the theory that they are billions of miles distant from the earth. The voiceless solitude affects his nerves,

and his eyes appear not to have the least inclination to close. His Oriental mind, accustomed from childhood to hearing long jinn stories and accounts of encounters with evil spirits, busies itself in the midst of that awe-inspiring silence in conjuring up all sorts of fantastic pictures. Having become highly sensitive Eliphaz sees a vision, a spirit passing before his face, interposing between him and the stars. It stands still in mid-air. Fear comes upon him in a nightmare and makes all his bones to shake. A chill of horror runs through him; his hair stands up. Then, all of a sudden, he hears a voice, deep, solemn, firm, breaking the fearful silence that surrounds him and saying:

> Shall mortal man be more just than God?
> Shall a man be more pure than his maker?

What can be more poetic, yea,

rather, dramatic, than that? Surely Eliphaz is a very versatile artist. He knows how to approach a very difficult subject. Back in his mind lurks the thought that Job, a mortal man, has been suffering as a direct consequence of his sin. Job, by complaining, has set himself above God, thus making himself more just than God. But it would not be wise to say that to Job at the start. Hence the impersonal or general way in which he expresses himself in his first speech — "Shall mortal man be more just than God?" — "But man is born unto trouble" — "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." It is man in general, and not Job, with whom Eliphaz is apparently concerned.

In his second speech (ch. 15) Eliphaz flings aside the garb of courtesy and becomes somewhat direct. Although he does not say to Job, right to his face, "Thou

art a wicked man," he paints before Job's eyes, in his own imaginative way, a very glaring picture of the wicked. After telling Job that his own lips testify against him, and after reiterating what he had already stated in his first speech regarding the justice and righteousness of God as contrasted with the corruption of a man "that drinketh iniquity like water," he proceeds to paint an unpleasant picture (15 : 17–35). Of course, a keen-minded poet like Job could not fail to understand whom Eliphaz has in mind when he so masterfully paints that picture.

In his third and last speech (ch. 22) Eliphaz unmasks his real self. What has already been surging inside his bosom finds now an outlet. Tired of soaring high in the region of visions and dreams and of speaking indirectly to a man against whom he has many

charges to make, he now descends to terra firma and looks Job squarely in the face. He has already felt the odds going against him, has seen his two friends intimidated by Job's vehemence of expression, and has watched with no little fear the rise of Job's overwhelming tide of thought; and now he must aim his dagger at the most vulnerable point and stab. It is his last chance. He speaks to Job in rapid flaming sentences:

Is not thy wickedness great? (a fearful frown.)
Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for nought,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry . . .
Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

By whom? . . . (Eliphaz' eyes set fiercely on Job) . . .
By thee, O righteous Job! . . . (very sarcastic).
O Job, Job, be sensible!

Most of the fatherless children in Palestine, if they have nobody to look after them, go about the streets with an outstretched arm, begging. To break such an arm would be a terrible sin. Eliphaz charges Job with such a sin. Therefore, he declares, snares are round about Job and darkness has enveloped him.

In short, sin, according to Eliphaz, is the direct cause of Job's misery. And as a last advice he exhorts him to acquaint himself with God and be at peace. He can never delight himself in the Almighty and lift up his face unto him unless he has taken him as his treasure. God saves the humble person, the one who has none of the above six charges against his

THREE MEN TO A SPADE

character, but who bows his head submissively to God's visitations, never doubting his justice, never questioning. That is the philosophy of Eliphaz.

THE SPEECHES OF BILDAD

Bildad's opening speech (ch. 8:) like that of Eliphaz, is devoid of any direct attacks or even stinging expressions. Its burden is that God will not uphold the evil-doer, but he will awake for the pure and upright. If Job, instead of complaining, were to seek diligently unto God, surely he would make him prosperous, for the Almighty will not cast away a perfect man.

Furthermore, Bildad invites Job to cast a glance over the past ages with the intent of deriving some helpful lesson from the accumulated experiences of those who came before him, " for we are but of yesterday and know noth-

ing." To him the past teaches that " the hope of the godless man shall perish."

In his second speech (ch. 18) Bildad harps on the same string on which Eliphaz had harped in his second speech. Only his picture of the wicked man is worse than that of Eliphaz. His words are full of venom. One can easily imagine Bildad half-standing in the midst of a large circle of boisterously-clapping young men, his eyes set fiercely on Job, his head shaking at him, and the tambourine quivering and tinkling in his left hand above his head as he sings:

The light of the *wicked* shall be put out.
The spark of *his* fire shall not shine.
The light shall be dark in *his* tent . . .
A gin shall take *him* by the heels.
A snare shall lay hold on *him* . . .
Terrors shall make *him* afraid on every side . . .
He shall have neither son nor son's son . . . 18 : 5–19.

What could be more rasping to Job than such a worse-than-direct denunciation? Every line breathes the spirit of vindictiveness. Most likely Eliphaz and Bildad had agreed beforehand on the best way to torment the proud spirit of the old poet by whom they had been defeated in many previous contests. A better opportunity they cannot expect to have, now that the hand of God is upon him.

What deserves particular notice in Bildad's description of the wicked man is v. 19, "He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people." No worse calamity could befall a native of Palestine than to be childless. You hear it said everywhere in Syria, "One's happiness consists in the number of children he has." A childless person is pitied by every body, and on every occasion when a good wish is not considered

out of place you hear people say, "We hope that God will send him a son." Even if he offer a glass of water to a passerby, the glass will be returned with the almost too-frequent wish, "We hope that God will send you a son." In a land such as Palestine where marriage is looked forward to as the chief occasion of one's happiness, and where wedding festivities sometimes continue for a whole week during which old and young participate in eating, drinking and singing, and where the son is called the staff upon which the father leans in his last days, — in such a land it is no marvel that an implied imprecation like Bildad's should have stabbed Job through the heart.

Bildad's third and last speech (ch. 25) is very short. It is a song of praise and has nothing to do with Job.

THE SPEECH OF ZOPHAR

Zophar sings twice only. The points of similarity between Zophar's first speech (ch. 11) and that of Bildad are quite apparent. Both stanchly believe that suffering is God's immediate punishment for sin, and both advise Job to lift up his face toward God in the spirit of contrition.

In his second speech (ch. 20) Zophar also, like Bildad, occupies himself with such a graphic and bitter description of the wicked as would not fail to send shivers down a sinner's back. He must have followed Bildad's example in the manner of delivery and the tone of voice.

It is noteworthy that Zophar reflects more plainly than his two friends the prevailing belief of the East when he sings:

> The triumphing of the wicked is short
> And the joy of the godless but for a moment.

No matter how materially prosperous a man may be, though he be the wealthiest individual in the world, if, according to the dictum of public opinion, the fear of God is not holding perfect sway in his heart, then surely a time will come when " he shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. . . . His children shall seek the favor of the poor. . . . He shall suck the poison of asps. . . . When he is about to fill his belly, God will cast the fierceness of his wrath upon him, and will rain it upon him while he is eating." Not only the earth, but " the heavens shall reveal his iniquity."

Summing up: — The three friends believed that the wicked, doubtless, received his punishment for sin while his eyes were still open to this visible world. Very likely it never crossed their minds,

"WHEREFORE HIDEST THOU THY FACE?"
Job 13:24

while they were singing, that there was such a thing as a resurrection with the possibility of retribution. Therefore, they attributed Job's sufferings to a wilful wickedness in his own life which he was unwilling to confess.

THE SPEECHES OF JOB

What Job says to the so-called three friends may be summed up in a few words — "There is not a wise man among you: you are all *forgers of lies, physicians of no value, artful hypocrites.* I know you! Do you wish that God should lay open your hearts before this assemblage of men and search you out? You cannot deceive him." — (See 13 : 1–12 and 17 : 10.)

Therefore, judging from Job's words, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar cannot be considered true friends of Job, for the lack of sympathy they have betrayed is directly

opposed to the right spirit of Oriental friendship and cannot be tolerated for a single moment inside its shrine. In reality, the three friends are three poets who have had more than one encounter with Job in days past and have been badly defeated, and now, having heard that the old poet has been at last afflicted by God, they call upon him to rub some salt into his breaking boils.

Having thus cleared the way we can now proceed to what Job says regarding his relation to God. This embraces the main section of Job's speeches, and it contains the object for which the Book of Job exists. The visit of the three friends is simply an incidental means which brings what the vexed old poet has to say about God into bold relief.

The distinctive voice of the Orient in Job's days is that of rigid, blind, childish conservatism.

It is a voice which solemnly informs the race that their Creator is the Absolute, who demands from them incessant worship in child-like faith and whose doings are never to be questioned. It is the voice which Moses heard in the midst of the inspiring solitude of Sinai saying, "Draw not nigh hither."

But Job, in many respects, voices the spirit of an advanced age, probably an age of transition. His voice is the voice of rebellion: it is the united voice of millions of Jobs all over the world, who, although living up to the best known standards of righteousness, and striving to become as perfect as God is, are still mercilessly visited by some of the most malignant diseases known. It is the voice of the Occident, the voice of the enlightened section of humanity, who would like to probe into the mysteries of the spiritual world

hoping to discover what may strengthen their faith and brighten their outlook.

Three points stand out pre-eminently in Job's speeches regarding his relation to God — *Job's integrity, God's wrath,* and *Job's longing for an intercessor.*

1. *Job's integrity.* The testimony of the writer of the Prologue regarding Job's life is enviable. He says, "And that man (Job) was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil" (1 : 1). No weight can be justly attached to the testimony of the three friends regarding Job's character for, as we have seen, they are malicious enemies, "forgers of lies."

Job himself says a great deal about his own integrity, or the uprightness of his life. That is really the rock on which he stands. We have no reason to doubt his assertion of his own righteousness.

POVERTY

Job 29: 16

It is the consciousness of his having walked in God's straight paths which gives him such fluency of speech and inflexibility of bearing in this great poetical contest. He can fearlessly raise himself a little on the *mizbeleh* and say to God, "I will speak . . . I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a sea monster, that thou settest a watch over me? . . . Let me alone for my days are vanity. Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee?" (7 : 11–20). And he can look in the face the people who are listening to him and declare, "For he (God) breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause . . . *I am perfect*" (9 : 17–21). And then, pointing with his finger to heaven, he can also assert "But he knoweth the way I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23 : 10).

It is necessary here to be reminded that what is meant in the Book of Job by the words righteousness, perfection and integrity is not exactly what is meant by them in our day. Here is what they mean, in Job's own words:

I delivered the poor that cried,
The fatherless also, that had none to help them . . .
I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy . . .
My justice was as a robe and a diadem.
I was eyes to the blind,
And feet was I to the lame.
I was a father to the needy:
And the cause of him that I knew not I searched out.
And I brake the jaws of the unrighteous,
And plucked the prey out of his teeth
(29:12-17).

Job's perfection was measured by the standards of his age, when the plucking of the prey out of the teeth of a neighbor universally known as godless was considered a righteous act. The highly re-

fined element of subjective holiness involved in the word *perfection* in later Christian usage, especially in such places as Matt. 5 : 48, never occurred to Job or to any of his contemporaries.

Furthermore, it was a common belief in Job's day that God was against the wicked to destroy him and with the righteous to make him prosperous, that "terrors shall make the wicked afraid on every side" (18 : 11), and "his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread" (27 : 14), "yet shall the righteous hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger" (17 : 9).

Thus Job has a very important complaint to make against God. He says, "Behold now, I have set my cause in order; I *know that I am righteous*" (13 : 18). Therefore, I have right to expect kindness from my God. But, on the contrary,

He hath taken me by the neck and dashed me to pieces:
He hath also set me up for his mark . . .
He cleaveth my reins asunder . . .
He breaketh me with breach upon breach;
He runneth upon me like a giant . . .
My face is red with weeping
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;
Although there is no violence in my hands,
And my prayer is pure (16 : 12–17).

Viewed from Job's standpoint and judged by the common standards of his time, the complaint is just. A righteous man, whose mind has not yet been irradiated by the glorious light of immortality, naturally expects some compensation for his righteous acts of self-denial in this visible world. If not, what could then be the reward of righteousness?

And not only that, but what vexes Job still more is the persecution he has been receiving at

A COMMON TYPE OF DWELLING-PLACE IN JOB'S DAY

the hands of the wicked. He says:

I am as one that is a laughing-stock
to his neighbor,
I who called upon God, and he answered:
The just, the perfect man is a laughing-
stock (12 : 4).

Also:

But he hath made me a byword of the
people;
And they spit in my face (17 : 6).
They abhor me, they stand aloof from
me,
And spare not to spit in my face . . .
They thrust aside my feet . . .
In the midst of the ruin they roll them-
selves upon me (30 : 10–14).

It is not an uncommon sight to see in some Oriental city a crowd of mischievous children following an idiot in the streets and amusing themselves by tormenting him. They would throw water on him, spit on his face, push each other on him, thrust their feet between his feet while he was walking, to trip him and make him fall, and

use all imaginable sorts of tricks to tease what little there was of mind out of him. That was the chief reason why in Christ's day most of the idiots, believed then to be possessed by evil spirits, sought cemeteries and secluded places in the wilderness and lived far away from the abodes of men. Doubtless Job, in the eyes of his unenlightened neighbors, is no better than those idiots, and, therefore, deserves as hard a persecution. One can easily imagine him lying on the *mizbeleh*, his body covered with sores, and warding off with his hands the attacks of a large circle of street boys. They would hurl themselves on him, spit on his face, drag him here and there from behind by his robe, shake their heads at him in derision, throw lizards and frogs on his neck, and torment him as much as they could. Would one then blame Job if he should cry,

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul? (7 : 11).

Or if he should groan

Even if it would please God to crush me? (6 : 9).

To suffer physical pain and to become at the same time the laughing-stock of his people, is more than Job can bear without complaining; or, in other words, without seeking to know from God the exact reason for such undeserved treatment.

2. *God's wrath.* There was once a boy in one of the British Mission schools on Mt. Lebanon, Syria, who was entirely different from any other boy in that school. His massive head, ample in front, indicated that he was by no means lacking in brain matter. But he was as changeable as the American weather. One hour he would be laughing hilariously as though he

had been transported in spirit into Paradise and made to taste the water of the elysian springs of God, and another hour he would go about with a downcast countenance, moody, moping, as though an avalanche of trouble had burst upon him and buried him alive. One day he would be a Christian strolling about the school grounds shouting halleluiah; another day, a sneaky deceitful devil sneering at everything that savored of religion.

But the interesting feature in that fickle boy was the cause which he always gave for such frequent changes in his life. It was not uncommon to hear him say to some teacher who had shown loving interest in his spiritual welfare something like the following:

"What is the use of my being religious? If I am converted or not you punish me just the same. Surely you harbor some grudge

against me." Then, frowning fiercely, he would add: "You treat the bad boys better than me. No more religion for me! To become a Christian means nothing more than to become a target for the whimsical teachers."

Job's state of mind at this stage of his affliction is exactly similar to that of the Syrian boy during his season of gloom. After long reflection Job arrives at the startling conclusion that God has been holding him for his enemy (13 : 24; 16 : 12; 19 : 11), and that, like human beings, the Almighty is passing through a fit of unaccountable anger (14 : 13; 19 : 11). It can not be otherwise, Job argues to himself, for were not God angry and in a highly strained state of mind, he would not treat me so arbitrarily, inquiring after mine iniquity although he knows I am not wicked.

Then it is that Job flings out

his arms in a gesture of utter helplessness and sings:

If I be wicked, woe unto me;
And if I be righteous, yet shall I not lift up my head (10:14, 15).

When God is angry he becomes like an Oriental despot: neither good nor bad acts can succeed in coaxing a smile to his face. His actions become more or less arbitrary, for "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (23:13.) He might do something of which, like men, He would later repent. Hence the much debated repentance of God mentioned in the Old Testament (Ex. 32:14; 2 Sam. 24:16; 1 Chr. 21:15; Jer. 26:19).

In order to hasten the passing away of the dangerous frown from God's face, Orientals resort to offerings and sacrifices. For as the child will not wipe off its tears unless it sees a basket of oranges

placed before it, so God, the Oriental mind argues, will not smile benignantly again unless the sinner shows a spirit of real generosity. A Moses would hasten to offer a sacrifice, fully convinced that nothing could appease the flashing anger of the Deity like the traditional smell of burning flesh. Another Oriental would run toward God's tabernacle with a basket of first-fruits or a sack of wheat. But what does our Man of Patience do? Instead of resorting to offerings he looks up toward heaven and prays:

Oh that thou wouldst hide me in Sheol,
That thou wouldst keep me secret,
until thy wrath be past,
That thou wouldst appoint me a set
time, and remember me! (14 : 13.)

In the midst of the terrific storm which he now finds raging around him, with lightning flashing and thunder pealing and the wind of God's wrath blowing with titanic

force, the old poet, unwilling to forsake his hitherto unfailing Refuge, prays that he should be hid in some dark cavern where he could lie secure until God's wrath be past. What a splendid faith! It recalls to mind the faith of an old Syrian who died a few years ago. As he sat one day, blind, in the corner of a dark room on Mt. Lebanon, a Christian lady approached him and said, "How are you?" He raised his head and stared vacantly in her direction with eyes which had not perceived daylight for five years and said:

"What shall I answer? My world is pitch-dark. But I see with my mind's eye a rope extending from my room to the Mercy-seat. I hold that rope fast with both these weak hands of mine day and night. I never dare let that hold go."

Then after the storm of God's

wrath is past He would remember Job and smile again at him in loving kindness.

It is at this point that Job's character shines with dazzling splendor. It is this cleaving of the world-famed Holy-Land poet unto his integrity that has immortalized his name and made his patience proverbial. Read the following utterances of his and marvel:

Behold he will slay me; I have no hope:
Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him (13 : 15).

Also:

Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.
My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go (27 : 5, 6).

Job knows that he is righteous, and he will not for a single moment tolerate any idea of ever forsaking his righteousness. That is to him the "goodly pearl" whose price is far above the price of any jewel

this world possesses, and no power in heaven or earth shall ever succeed in wresting it away from him. The world may persecute him and spit in his face, disease may eat up his flesh and drive away sleep from his eyes and terrify him by all kinds of hideous spectres, and God may take him by the neck and dash him to pieces, but that pearl shall never be suffered to part from him. He clasps it and presses it to his heart with all his power. He will guard it against the powers of darkness just as a lioness would guard her whelps against the boldest hunters. That is the virginal chastity of his whole existence and he will defend it unto death. Heaven being obscured on account of God's anger, that pearl is the sufferer's only hope, the brilliant star that still shines through a rift in the dark clouds. (Read Ro. 8 : 38, 39 and compare.)

A DAUGHTER OF JOB

3. *Job's longing for an intercessor.* If there be a land on the surface of this globe which has an indisputable right to be called the Land of Intercession it is the Holy Land. An investigator will be amazed to see the place intercession holds in the life of the Syrians. Almost everything needs an intercessor or a go-between. The doctrine of intercession or mediation on which hinges our salvation is the spontaneous expression of the very spirit of the Holy Land, if one may be safely allowed to detach it from the realm of direct inspiration. Or, in other words, the Bible, being the inspired expression of the real life of the Hebrews, gives a very prominent and essential place to intercession in the magnificent structure of Christianity. Intercession is indigenous to the Holy Land and was made use of by God in the revealing of his plan of salvation.

For illustration. Two men quarrel and are summoned to appear before the local representative of the government, called *mudeer*, for a short informal investigation preparatory to sending them to court. Each of these two men hands the *mudeer* a number of letters of intercession from important men to whose influence with the Pasha, it very often happens, the *mudeer* owes the very position he now holds. What can the *mudeer* do in such a dilemma? In order not to displease any of the intercessors he very often resorts to reconciling the two offenders and sending them back to their homes. A Lebanon judge once said that not a day passes without his receiving a number of letters of that kind, and sometimes, that is the only mail he receives. You may be stopping at a store in Beirut to buy a Turkish rug, and while going

through the undesirable ordeal of bargaining and beating down the price to the just limit, a stranger may step in and say to the storekeeper, " For my sake let him have it at such and such a price," or he may say to you, " For my sake pay him so much."

Coming to Job we find him at the darkest stage in his affliction longing for an intercessor. The natural desire for a go-between in this Oriental poet springs up to the surface when it is most needed. God is against him, the world is against him, his friends, and even his wife, are against him, and suddenly he sees a vision, — how, nobody knows, — that of an umpire laying his hand upon God and him (9 : 33), of a witness vouching for him on high (16 : 19), yea, rather of a living Redeemer,who will one day stand on this earth to be seen by those who love him (19 : 25, 26).

All Old Testament scholars admit that the Hebrew text of 19 : 25, 26 is almost irremediably corrupt and that attempts at reconstruction by German scholars have only increased the jumble. But in the midst of that heap of Textual ruin glitters the word *goël*, a priceless jewel of unparalleled beauty, which ought to be held up at arm's length that all the world may see it. Whether it means redeemer, or vindicator, or any other similar appellative, it means to the Syrians the embodiment of that ever-swelling hope for an umpire, or a witness, or a go-between, who will stand between God and man and effect a reconciliation.

In fact, this word *goël* revives the spirits of millions of mourners by the tombs of their beloved ones, turns over a leaf in God's book of evolution, and sounds a note of victory. The sentiment that lies

behind the remarkable assertion "I know that my Redeemer liveth" has not been fully expressed by Handel nor by any other musical or poetical composer. A minute ago Job was groaning in the lowest depths of despair and saying concerning God, "He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone; and my hope hath he plucked up like a tree" (19 : 10), and now he suddenly raises himself up on the *mizbeleh*, his face shining like that of Moses when he came down from Sinai, and shouts, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." That is inspiration. That is how God sometimes reveals his truths to man.

At this point one may justly ask, What is Job's attitude toward immortality? A thorough perusal of Job's utterances will reveal the fact that the suffering poet, although ahead of his three friends and possibly of all the illustrious

men of his day in keenness of mind and breadth of spiritual vision, shares with them at the beginning of the poetical contest the primitive belief that death ends all activity. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest" (3 : 17). "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more" (7 : 9).

As the contest advances Job begins to perceive a glimmer of light ahead. His thoughts are a little confused in regard to the after-death fate of the soul. One minute he asserts that the dead shall not awake nor ever be roused from their sleep, and another minute he asks hesitatingly, with his eyes strained to catch the faint twinkling of a far-away star, "If a man die shall he live again?" He is feeling his way slowly to the mountain-top. He is still en-

A FUNERAL ON MOUNT LEBANON

veloped in the annoying mist of uncertainty. Every now and then a thunder-clap shakes the very ground under his feet, thus threatening to send him rolling down to the bottom of some dark abyss. But he presses on, undaunted by the raging forces of doubt and the achings of his own body, until at last he reaches the top. Soon the clouds break up and begin to retreat downward, bringing into view a bright sky studded with myriads of stars. Inspiration again. There, just above the horizon, the victorious poet sees the Star of Immortality, the sight of which revives his dying spirit and gives him fresh vigor to combat the horrible disease which has been harrowing his flesh. He exclaims:

> But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth,
> And at last he will stand up upon the earth:

And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed,
Then without my flesh shall I see God.

Thanks to suffering. Had it not been for the elephantiasis Job might never have seen that vision. From the abject *mizbeleh* of scorn to the mountain-top of inspiration, from the raging tempest of physical pain to the balmy breeze of healing, from the cleaving unto an imperfect integrity to the beholding of Heaven's transcendent perfection — that is the glorious course. But through it all Job's integrity shines like a star of the first magnitude.

There is hardly anything new in what Job says after he has seen the Star of Immortality. The swelling tide of his thoughts reaches its highest watermark in 19 : 25, 26.

At last the voluble poet lays down the tambourine. The three friends are silent, manifesting all

signs that they have been vanquished. Job's audacity and vehemence of expression, backed by an unusually strong personality, have been more than a match to their limited resources.

Then a young man, Elihu by name, steps forward and answers Job. But the old poet does not pay the least attention to him, for after defeating the three older poets it would be far below his dignity to break a lance with a young man.

As Elihu is about to lay down the tambourine a flash of lightning turns all eyes southward. A fearful crash of thunder follows. Dark clouds are stirring heavily in the south, their direction being evidently northward. A thunder storm is coming. But the brave Elihu does not allow this sudden manifestation of God's nearness to prevent him from using the occasion as a means to say some-

thing more on God's excellency of power. Hence the thirty-seventh chapter.

Then the priest of the village, or the religious leader, steps forward and speaks for Jehovah. He has been listening, although unnoticed, to the speeches of the poets, and it is his duty, being God's mouthpiece to men, to give God's judgment about the puzzling question discussed.

The speech he delivers, placed on the mouth of Jehovah, is a grand piece of poetry, describing in pleasant detail the combined power and wisdom of God as manifested in both inanimate and animate creation. It pictures the greatness of God in contrast with the smallness of man, or the bigness of Jehovah in contrast with the littleness of Job. And all that is expressed in a delightfully sarcastic way which, on the face of it, may give the impression that the

A BLIND BEGGAR OF BEIRUT

speaker is proudly making a display of his strength.

There is another Jehovah speech which is the exact complement of the one which has just been considered. That speech has never been written down, but is always present to the mind of every intelligent Oriental reader of the Book of Job. It may be thus summarized:

"I am, O Job, creator and preserver of all you see. I know everything about you, and I know what is best for you. Trust me through joy and pain, just as a child trusts its powerful father, I am the one 'who provideth for the raven his prey' I am all in all; have faith in my power and wisdom and keep quiet and calm."

This speech is implied in the recorded Jehovah speech. It is very common in Oriental writings. especially in Arabic poetry, to paint one side of the picture and

leave the other side to be inferred by the onlooker. A very common Syrian proverb says, "An intelligent person catches what you have in mind from a mere gesture." A simple gesture is sufficient to make him understand your thoughts.

In other words, it is very common in Syria not to give a direct answer. A beggar stops at a door and, instead of asking directly for a drink of water, he says, "I am very thirsty," which simple statement will be sufficient to procure him the desired object. The disciples of John went to Jesus and asked him a direct question, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" But Jesus did not give a direct answer. He commanded John's disciples to go and tell John that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, etc. He gave one side of the picture and left

the other for John to infer. He could have answered John in one word — *yes*, but he would not have been distinctively Oriental. Furthermore, Jesus' answer in its present form is ten times more forcible and suggestive than it would have been had he simply answered, *yes*.

Hence, by drawing such a masterful and vivid picture of God's power and wisdom, the author of the Jehovah speech calms the agitation of Job's stricken spirit, pours balsam upon his aching wounds, and makes him say very humbly:

Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?
I lay my hand upon my mouth . . .
I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth thee:
Wherefore I abhor myself,
And repent in dust and ashes.

The calm state of trust which follows on the heels of that of

turmoil and excited questioning floods Job's heart with joy. Soon healing comes on the wings of the dove of peace, the scales of the horrible disease fall as if by magic, and Job bids the *mizbeleh* farewell. The very angels of the morning sing, Victory for the Man of Patience.

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